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SUBJECT: A GLIMMER OF HOPE FOR THE SPLM NUBA AS ABDEL AZIZ AL-HELOU
ASSUMES THE ROLE OF SOUTHERN KORDOFAN DEPUTY GOVERNOR

REFS: A. KHARTOUM 264
[B](#). KHARTOUM 186
[C](#). 08 KHARTOUM 1435

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[1](#). (U) On April 14, Nuba mountains native and respected SPLM national figure Abdel Aziz Al-Helou was sworn in by the President of the Government of National Unity (GNU) as the Deputy Governor for Southern Kordofan State (SKS). Abdel Aziz's appointment to this position comes after the SPLM Nuba expressed continuous, deep disappointment with former SPLM Deputy Governor Daniel Kodi for failing to work effectively with the National Congress Party (NCP) to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Southern Kordofan state (refs A and C). Kodi was removed as the Chairman of the SPLM for Southern Kordofan State in a vote of no-confidence by the SPLM Southern Kordofan State Liberation Council on February 19 (ref A). Following this action, SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir Mayardit held discussions with Deputy Governor Kodi, Deputy Secretary of the SPLM for the Southern Sector Dr. Anne Itto, former SKS Governor and current GNU State Minister for Animal Resources Ismail Jalab, and Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile CPA Protocol author and Nuba Mountains native Abdel Aziz Al-Helou on a way forward for SPLM leadership in Southern Kordofan State. Al-Helou's recent swearing-in as Deputy Governor of SKS comes as a result of those discussions.

[2](#). (SBU) Deputy Speaker of the Southern Kordofan State Legislature Sadiq Mansour (SPLM) told poloff on April 15 that he is very hopeful that Al-Helou will deliver much-needed progress on CPA implementation to SKS. He noted that Al-Helou should focus on setting straight security arrangements as called for in the CPA, as well as getting police and civil administration integration on track. This is a CPA deliverable that is unique to Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, (ref B). Mansour said that the SKS SPLM State Liberation Council will hold a session to elect its next SPLM State Chairman shortly and hoped that Dr. Anne Itto would attend. He hinted that Al-Helou will be nominated as the next SPLM Chairman for SKS, and stated that this will provide Al-Helou with the "political power" he needs at the state-level to accomplish his role successfully. Mansour said that Al-Helou is accepted by "all of the people," and that he will encounter very high expectations in his role as Deputy Governor and, if elected, as SPLM State Chairman. In Mansour's view, it is the SPLM Nubans' hope that Al-Helou can solve the CPA, security, and political challenges of Southern Kordofan (no doubt a mammoth task) and then be released to the SPLM National *Secretariat* in order to run in early 2010 as the SPLM's candidate for the President of the Government of National Unity.

[3](#). (SBU) SPLM SKS Secretary Arnu Lodi told poloff on April 15 that the SPLM's mission in SKS was to assure "strong leadership" for the SPLM Nuba. In his view, this has been accomplished through the

appointment of Al-Helou to Deputy Governor. Lodi said that he had spoken with Al-Helou on April 14 and told him that the SPLM Nuba is entering "a new era;" this is the first time that Al-Helou will return to the Nuba Mountains in a state leadership role since the signing of the CPA. Lodi praised Al-Helou as the SPLM figure best-suited to work with the tribes of Southern Kordofan, and said that he is "widely-respected" in the state. He cautioned that Al-Helou will immediately face a number of challenges in SKS. "For four years, we have had no real progress on the CPA," lamented Lodi. Lodi said that Al-Helou is currently in Juba attending the SPLM Political Bureau Meeting. According to Lodi, Al-Helou is expected to take up his seat as Deputy Governor in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan at the end of April.

14. (SBU) Prior to his recent visit to the Washington, DC with other SPLM leaders in late March, Al-Helou told poloff that Kodi's removal as SPLM State Chairman came mainly as a result of his failure to implement the CPA in SKS. "They blamed Kodi instead of the NCP, when it is the NCP that is the real obstacle for CPA progress," said Al-Helou. Although poloff (and perhaps even Al Helou himself) was not aware that he would replace Kodi in mid-April, Al-Helou spoke with measured caution about taking on a leadership role in SKS. He referred to the Sudan Armed Forces' (SAF) alleged arming of Arab tribes in Southern Kordofan (in particular the Hawazma,) the unrest between the Nuba and the Misseriya in the area, and the NCP's unwillingness to implement the CPA. He made clear there would be great challenges ahead for any SPLM political leader in the Nuba Mountains. Al-Helou asked if the US would support him if he were to take on a leadership role in Southern Kordofan.

15. (SBU) Comment: Abdel Aziz Al-Helou's appointment as Deputy Governor for Southern Kordofan is a positive, welcomed, and long-awaited event for the SPLM Nuba. Al-Helou is indeed a well-respected figure in the state, and represents the SPLM putting its best foot forward to accomplish its political goals in Southern

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Kordofan. The latter include CPA implementation and the SPLM winning a majority in state legislative elections so that it can influence the popular consultation to allow the Nuba to get more out of the CPA than its current "raw deal," which makes them beholden to GoS administration.

16. (SBU) Comment continued: In late March, Al-Helou seemed extremely cautious and almost nervous about assuming any type of leadership role in Southern Kordofan, regardless of his peoples' wide calls for him to return to the state. He is rightly skeptical about whether the NCP will allow any SPLM leader to succeed in the state before the 2010 elections. Now that Al-Helou will be at the helm of SPLM leadership in such a critical and volatile region, it is important that the USG provide him full support in pressing for CPA implementation in this state, which is located along the 1-1-56 north/south border. It is both poignant and appropriate that as one of the authors and negotiators of the CPA Protocol for Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, Al-Helou will return to his homeland to try and hold together a fragile peace in the region. At the same time, he will have to race to implement those things in the CPA that are crucial to the people of Southern Kordofan prior to the 2011 referendum for southern Sudan. Al-Helou will also be faced with the challenge of determining the best and most acceptable fate for SPLM Nuba in that state as the 2011 popular consultation in that state approaches. It is also important to note that Al-Helou's appointment as the Deputy Governor of Southern Kordofan comes at a loss to Darfur, as he was co-chair of the SPLM's Darfur Task Force (and is half-Darfuri himself). End comment.

FERNANDEZ